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**Inventory for
Manuscript Collection
MS-281**

Capt. Linwood F. McLain
Inclusive date: n.d., 1919-1930
Bulk dates: 1921-1924

by
Anastasia S. Weigle
(edited by Nathan Lipfert)
September 2012

Shelf feet: .5
Number of boxes: 1
Accession No. 96.70

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Abstract

McLain, Linwood Fossett, (b.1888-d.1973), *Captain*

Papers, 1919-1930 (Bulk dates: 1920-24)

1 Box (.50 shelf feet)

Ship captain from Portland, ME.

The papers of Capt. Linwood F. McLain follow his early career as master of various steamers with the United States Shipping Board. The papers include correspondence, crew lists, invoices, statements, slop accounts and incident reports for the steamers *Lake Fariston*, *Lake Gilboa*, *West Campgaw*, *Deuel*, *Sinasta*, *Dallas*, and *West Harcuvar*. Other maritime papers includes a steamboat license, navigation certificate of completion, letters of recommendations and an undated SOS teletype message for the steamer *St. Anne*. A few personal/ephemeral papers are also in the collection.

Donated by Howard E. Whalen on September 3, 1996.

MS-281, Accession No. 96.70.

Finding aid available in repository; folder and item level control.

Added entries—persons:

McLain, Linwood Fossett, *Captain*

Added entries—places:

Hamburg (GER)

Kingston (JAM)

Montreal (CAN)

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Dallas (Screw steamer)

Deuel (Screw steamer)

Lake Fariston (Screw steamer)

Lake Gilboa (Screw steamer)

Sinasta (Screw steamer)

United States Shipping Board

West Campgaw (Screw steamer)

West Harcuvar (Screw steamer)

Added entries—key terms:

Certificates

Crew lists

Merchant seamen

Navigation

Seafaring life

Ship captains

Ships—cargo

Stowaways

United States—History—World War, 1914-1918

Acquisition

Mr. Howard Whalen of Brunswick, Maine (a collector) donated the Capt. Linwood F. McLain papers on September 16, 1996, accession number 96.70.

Provenance

The donor purchased the papers at an auction on February 11, 1996 for \$80. It is unknown at this time how the auction house acquired these papers.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of these materials for research or study.

Physical Condition

The papers were housed in two large binders. All papers in the binder were placed in Mylar sleeves. The majority of the papers are in fairly good condition with only a few having minor tears.

Processing Notes

The papers, sleeved in Mylar, came in two binders. The papers were organized in chronological order starting with the first steamer Capt. Linwood was involved with. Since it is unknown to me the original order of the creator, I have chosen to keep the order the same other than sorting appropriately within each vessel group. For example, if the vessel papers for the steamer *Deuel* are organized chronologically by creation date with letters, accounts and incidents mixed throughout, I will group the correspondence, accounts and incident reports separately. This somewhat maintains the original order as the collection was received, but sorted by function within each vessel group (i.e., correspondence, accounts, incidents)

The papers were removed from the two binders and re-housed in archival folders and placed in an archival box. The papers are separated into four series: I. Military papers, II. Vessel papers, III. Maritime related papers and IV. Personal papers.

Biographical Notes

Captain Linwood Fossett McLain was born January 20, 1888 in New Harbor, Bristol, Maine. He was son to Alexander C. McLain and Lois A. Jones. He had two sisters, Anna J. (b.1889-d.?) and Verena E. (b.1893-d?). He married Emma Elizabeth (b.1888-d.1965), daughter of Alexander and Agnes E. Longfellow on December 2, 1909. Linwood and Emma's marriage

certificate identifies Linwood as a seaman. However, the 1910 U.S. Federal Census records indicate us that Linwood worked as a cutter in a shoe shop.²

Six month after the United States Congress declared war on Germany, Linwood enlisted in the Army, October 2, 1917. He was stationed at Camp Devens in Massachusetts, a temporary cantonment camp for training soldiers during the war. Linwood was stationed there until June 1, 1918 serving in Battery B, 303rd Field Artillery and Company B, 602 Engineers.¹ He was sent to Camp Laurel in Maryland before sailing for France on July 14, 1918 where he was stationed at Villeneuve. While in France, he was transferred to the United States tug *Gwalia* of which Linwood was acting Night Captain. He transitioned to Master Engineer, senior grade, while in service in Nantes and Havre.¹ He was recommended for a certificate of meritorious service in January 1919 and was discharged from military duty on June 11 that same year.

After completing his course in Navigation at the Training School of the Recruiting Service of the United States Shipping board, Linwood McLain was employed at Tropical Lines Company from April 15, 1920 to January 19, 1921 as First Officer on the *Lake Fariston* (Steamer) running between Kingston, Jamaica and South American ports. He was promoted to Master of the *Lake Gilboa* (Steamer) serving between June 6, 1920 to January 19, 1921. During his time aboard the steamer *Lake Gilboa*, Capt. McLain voyaged to Jamaica, Cartagena and Porto Colombia with 2477 barrels of fuel oil. Such short voyages were not without problems and there were a number of incidents Capt. McLain had to deal with during his voyages to the Caribbean on the steamer *Lake Gilboa*. On June 18, 1920, damage to the starboard bow of the work boat occurred while discharging cargo in Cartagena, Colombia. A crewman was unable to keep his hold on the wire while men took turns off the drum of the wench as they were discharging the cargo. The strain of holding the wire was too great and the crewman let go causing the boom to drop 30 feet onto the work boat causing irreparable damage.

Other incidents were desertion, injuries, delayed layovers, and stowaways. When the steamer *Lake Gilboa* returned to New York in July, a crewman by the name of Victor Pasqual deserted ship. Voyaging back to Jamaica, another crewman received an injury to his ankle while aboard the steamer requiring immediate medical attention. On November 27, the *Lake Gilboa* was slapped with an injunction against the company by the Bank Dugand in Barranquilla. A dispute between the company and the bank ensued delaying their departure. Another incident on the steamer *Lake Gilboa* happened while discharging cargo in Puerto Colombia. A stevedore was injured when cargo straps broke dropping contents upon him. Lastly, two stowaways were found aboard the steamer *Lake Gilboa*, having entered the steamer while it was anchored in Jamaica. Joseph Williamson and Jasper Samuels were deported back to Kingston, Jamaica in November 1920.

Between June 8 and July 31, 1922, Capt. Linwood F. McClain took command of the steamer *West Kibar* in Montreal voyaging from Montreal to Hamburg and Rotterdam, Germany and back to Montreal.

Capt. Linwood F. McLain then took command of the steamer *West Campgaw* sometime after August 1922 making two trans-Atlantic voyages from Boston and Portland to Germany and Antwerp. An incident occurred en route to Hamburg causing the steamer to become grounded. Leaving on Portland February 4, 1923 and arriving at Elbe River, Germany February 21, they came upon the passenger steamer *Melita*. What follows is a brief description by Captain Linwood McLain:

“The S/S ‘Melita,’ a two-funnel passenger boat, came up astern of us, proceeding at a good rate of speed (in my estimation about ten to twelve knots per hour), blew no whistles that we could hear to indicate that she was going to pass us, and as she passed us the suction created by this vessel’s passing so closely to the ‘West Campgaw’\’ cause our stern to go towards the ‘Melita’ and our bow toward the bank. Wheel put hard to starboard but ship would not steer. At 4:35 Ship’s bow grounded.” (folder 9)

Next, Capt. Linwood F. McLain took command of the steamer *Deuel* from April 1923 to August 1923. He voyaged from Montreal to Hamburg, Germany. Upon loading the ballast with 400 tons of sand and preparing to voyage back to Montreal from Hamburg, Germany on July 21, 1923 a fire broke out in the fire-room bilges. As described by the captain based on accounts made by the Chief Engineer and Fireman aboard:

“At 8:45 pm, the Chief Engineer Dittmar came up to the bridge where I was at the time and notified me that there was a fire in the fire room bilges, and that it would be necessary for us to anchor, as we would be unable to work engines when everything had to be shut off in the engineroom[sic]. Engines were accordingly stopped and ship’s head was allowed to cease before anchoring.” (folder 12)

Unfortunately, this solution caused a minor problem:

“Our position at this anchorage was approximately 800 feet northerly directed of Easte [sic] River entrance very close to port side of River Bank. As the channel is very narrow at that place ... Ship swung shortly upon anchoring as it was ebb tide and her stern caught on edge of Schwein Sands.” (folder 12)

The fire in the bilge room was finally put out at 10:21 pm but it spread to the shelter deck and port bunker:

“Due to the heat from the fire room bilges, the dunnage in No. 3 shelter deck and a protection casing to a sounding pipe in No. 3 lower hold, also some sawdust and bags in port bunker, caught fire.” (folder 12)

With no steam now and attempting to put out the fire, the *Deuel* steamer had to anchor in the narrow channel of the Black Sea until she could be stabilized before returning to Hamburg. At 7:30 am, with assistance from the tugs *Karl* and *Johann Petersen* at bow and *Caroline* on stern, the steamer *Deuel* proceeded safely to Hamburg, Germany where it docked at 11:40 am.

After retuning to Montreal from Hamburg, Capt. McLain then took command of the steamer *Sinasta* making trans-Atlantic voyages to London, Hamburg, Rotterdam and Montreal. From there the captain left the *Sinasta* to command the steamer *Dallas* between November 1923 and May 1924. Records shows that Capt. McLain was aboard the steamer *West Harcuvar* as commander in 1924. On May 2, 1926, under his command, Capt. McLain, his officers and crewman rescued four crewman from the French fishing schooner *Muguet*, 200 miles west of the Azores. The schooner was completely wrecked and sinking after a series of storms. Sadly, two men were lost.³

Capt. Linwood F. McLain left the steamer *West Harcuvar* sometime after November 1927 to take on a new position as Pilot for Portland, Maine Harbor. United States Federal Census records show that he continued on as a Pilot Captain for Portland Harbor in 1940 at the age of 52. Very little else is known about Capt. Linwood McLain after 1940. Capt. McLain and his wife Emma never had children. Emma died on August 30, 1965 at the age of 78 years and Capt. McLain died on March 10, 1973 at the age of 85 years.

The Capt. Linwood F. McLain papers show us a clear picture of his responsibilities as Captain aboard these vessels. He oversaw the safety of his crew and passengers. He had to ensure the steamers were running at their optimum, be able to navigate efficiently and oversee the vessels' performance. Capt. McLain had absolute authority over his vessels and the pressures involved with these responsibilities were tremendous. This is what defined Capt. McLain as a respected commander aboard these vessels.

References cited:

1. Francis, Charles. *The Fortunate Island of Monhegan: a Historical Monograph*. Worcester, MA Jenney Davis Press, 1922 [From Vol. 31 of the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society]. <http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/charles-francis-jenney/the-fortunate-island-of-monhegan-nne/page-6-the-fortunate-island-of-monhegan-nne.shtml>
2. Ancestry.com
3. The Wreck Site, <http://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?178500>

Scope and Content Notes

The Captain Linwood F. McLain papers primarily pertain to Capt. McLain's activities on multiple steamers between 1919 and 1927. Items in the collection include correspondence, telegrams, expense accounts, vouchers, crew payroll and slops accounts. There are few maritime related documents that do not pertain to any particular vessel. This would include his certificate of completion for navigation, a master's for steam or motor vessel and a SOS teletype message for the British tug *St. Anne* in distress.

Remaining few papers are personal and include a certificate for 10 shares for the Maine Centennial Memorial Building Corporation dated 1921, a driver's license dated 1925, and various ephemeral items which include a news clipping on his appointment as pilot boat captain for Portland Harbor, a blotter card, an address card and a passenger ticket aboard the steamer *West Campgaw* dated 1927.

Series Description

Series I. Military papers (1919): This series has only one document but it pertains to the Captain while in the army. This is a letter from the Commanding Officer, Company 124, Trans. Corp recommending Linwood F. McLain be awarded a certificate for Meritorious Services. It is dated January 21, 1919.

Series II. Vessel related papers (1920-1927): These are vessel related papers for steamers that Capt. McLain commanded between 1920 and 1927. The steamers were owned by the United

States Shipping Board. Papers include correspondence, expense accounts, slop accounts, payroll lists, vouchers and incident reports for the steamers *Lake Fariston*, *Lake Gilboa*, *West Kibar*, *West Campgaw*, *Deuel*, *Sinasta*, *Dallas*, and *West Harcuvar*. Additional papers for the steamer *Dallas* includes an inspection report (Nov. 1923 and April 1924) and a pilotage test (n.d.).

Series II. Maritime related papers (n.d., 1919, 1930): Maritime papers not connected to any particular vessel in this series. This includes an S.O.S. teletype message from the British tug *St. Anne* that she was sinking. Her position was identified as 50.40N 0.10W which places her in the English Channel. A tug and a lifeboat were enroute from Brighton offered assistance. Other papers include a certificate of course completion in Navigation from the United States Shipping board dated Sept. 10, 1919 and a Master's License for Steam and Motor vessels dated February 8, 1930.

Series IV. Personal papers (n.d., 1921, 1925, 1927): These papers are related to Capt. McClain's personal life and includes a certificate for 10 shares of capital stock for the Maine Centennial Memorial Building Corporation dated August 1, 1921; a drivers license dated April 6, 1924 and miscellaneous ephemera including a news clipping about his appointed position as pilot for Portland Harbor (ME).

MS-281 CAPT. LINWOOD F. MCLAIN PAPERS
Finding Aids

Box # Folder #

Series I. Military papers

- 1 1 Recommendation for Certificate of Meritorious Service, Jan. 21, 1919

Series II. Vessel related papers

Lake Fariston (Steamer)

- 2 Correspondence, June 1920

Lake Gilboa (Steamer)

- 3 Correspondence, outgoing, July – Dec 1920, January 1921
4 Accounts—expenses, wages & slops, July 1920-Jan. 1921
5 Incident reports
 Vessel related, June 1920
 Crew related injuries, n.d., Dec. 1920
 Stowaways, Immigration, Nov. 1920

West Kibar (Steamer)

- 6 Accounts (includes slops)—Montreal—Hamburg, Rotterdam,
GER—Montreal, June-July, Oct. 1923

West Campgaw (Steamer)

- 7 Correspondence, incoming & outgoing, April 1923
8 Accounts (incl. statements, vouchers, slops)
Hamburg, GER—Antwerp, BEL, Dec. 1922
Boston—Hamburg, GER—Antwerp, BEL, Jan.-Mar. 1923
Boston—Portland, Mar.-Apr. 1923
9 Incident report—Vessel grounded, Feb. 1923

Deuel (Steamer)

- 10 Correspondence, incoming, Nov. 1923
11 Accounts, statements and receipts, Apr.-Aug.1923
12 Incident Report—Fire, July 1923

Sinasta (Steamer)

- | | |
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| 13 | Correspondence, incoming, Sept.-Nov. 1923 |
| 14 | Outgoing, Sept.-Nov. 1923 |
| 15 | Accounts, general—Montreal-Hamburg, Rotterdam, GER-Montreal
Sept.-Oct. 1923 |
| | Accounts—Crew |
| 16 | Wages, Mar., Sept.-Nov. 1923 |
| 17 | Slops, Sept. & Nov. 1923 |
| 18 | Incident Report—cargo damage, flour, Oct.-Nov. 1923 |

Box# Folder#

Dallas (Steamer)

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|---|----|--|
| 1 | 19 | Correspondence, incoming n.d./outgoing Nov.-Dec. 1923 |
| | 20 | Incoming, Feb.-June 1924 |
| | 21 | Outgoing, Jan.-May 1924 |
| | | Accounts (incl. summary, expense reports, receipts) |
| | 22 | Baltimore—Boston—Copenhagen—Horsens—Norfolk,
Apr. 1923—May 1924 |
| | | Accounts—Crew |
| | 23 | Payroll, Nov. 1923—Mar. 1924 |
| | 24 | Slops [1923-24] |
| | | Incident reports |
| | 25 | Vessel related, weather related damage, Nov. 1923 |
| | 26 | Vessel related, damage, Jan. 1924 |
| | 27 | Crew related, Jan-Mar 1924 |
| | 28 | Inspection of vessel, report, Nov. 1923 & April 1924 |
| | 29 | Pilotage test, Norfolk & Newport News, n.d. |

West Harvucar (Steamer)

- | | |
|----|--|
| 30 | Correspondence, incoming only, 1926-27 |
| 31 | Accounts (bills and vouchers), Dec. 1924-Aug. 1927 |

Series III. Maritime related papers

- | | |
|----|--|
| 32 | S.O.S. message, SS <i>St. Anne</i> (British tug) sinking, n.d. |
| 33 | Certificates |
| | Course of Navigation, Deck Officer, 1919 |
| | Master License, Steam & Motor Vessels, 1930 |

Subseries IV. Personal Papers

- | | |
|----|---|
| 34 | Documents |
| | • Certificate of shares (Maine Centennial Memorial Bldg. Corp.), 1921 |
| | • Driver's license April 6, 1925 |
| 35 | Ephemeral |
| | • Blotter card, Hasler & Company Advertisement, n.d. |
| | • Address card, Jan. 29, 1921 |
| | • Passenger ticket aboard the steamer <i>West Campgaw</i> , August 1927 |
| | • News clipping, Appointed Pilot of Port, Portland, ME [1927]? |